

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7942

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FOR AF/W

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECIN, EGIN, XY, US
SUBJECT: ECOWAS

REF: STATE 159681

RESPONSES BELOW KEYED TO REFTEL:

A. A. MAURITANIA WILL MOST LIKELY DEVOTE THE NECESSARY TIME AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOWAS, BUT QUESTIONS OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES DEVELOPMENT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDABLY MUCH HIGHER PRIORITY. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HAS EMPHASIZED HIS STRONG SUPPORT OF ECOWAS, AS WELL AS OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. MAURITANIA RATIFIED ECOWAS TREATY AND FIVE PROTOCOLS IN JULY 1977.

B. MAURITANIA VIEWS ITS COMMITMENT TO OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS CEAO OR OMVS, AS COMPLEMENTARY TO ITS COMMITMENT TO ECOWAS

C. C. MAURITANIANS SEE LACK OF EFFICIENT PAYMENT MECHANISM AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMON CURRENCY AS BARRIER, BUT NOT AN INSURMOUNTABLE ONE. GIVEN PROBABLE DELAYS IN SETTLING ACCOUNTS, CLEARING HOUSE MECHANISM WOULD BE HELPFUL.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION LINKS WITH ECOWAS STATES ESERVIC TO OTHER ECOWAS COUNTRIES IS LONG RANGE GOAL OF MAURITANIA. AT PRESENT ONLY RADIOTELEPHONE LINKS TO DAKAR, PAIRS AND MADRID.

THE ONLY PAVED ROAD LINK TO ANOTHER ECOWAS COUNTRY IS SINGLE ROUTE TO DAKAR WHICH INVOLVES AN UNRELIABLE FERRY.

E. AND F. IN 1976 IRON ORE AND COPPER EXPORTS CONSTITUTED OVER 80 PCT OF TOTAL MAURITANIAN EXPORT EARNINGS, AND SINCE ALL THESE EXPORTS WERE TO EUROPE OR JAPAN, OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED INTER-AFRICAN TRADE ARE OBVIOUSLY LIMITED. THUS, MAURITANIA IS COMPETITIVE WITH OTHER IRON ORE EXPORTERS (LIBERIA, GUINEA AND SIERRA LEONE). IN LIMITED SENSE MAURITANIA IS COMPETITIVE WITH SENEGAL AND GAMBIA AS ALL THREE EXPORT FISH, MAURITANIAN EXPORTS IN 1974

TO ECOWAS COUNTRIES WERE ONLY \$312,000 THE LOWEST SUCH FIGURE FOR ANY MEMBER EXCEPT GUINEA-BISSAU. OTHER ECOWAS COUNTRIES ARE KNOWN TO BE INTERESTED IN IMPORTING FISH FROM MAURITANIA, AND MAURITANIA COULD POTENTIALLY INCREASE FRUIT IMPORTS. HOWEVER, POTENTIAL FOR MODIFICATION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES IS CLOSELY TIED TO LOW LEVEL OF EXISTING RESOURCES. DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE VARIED AGRICULTURAL OR INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY COULD INCREASE COMPLEMENTARITY.

G. MAURITANIA SHOULD BE ABLE TO MEET ITS COMMITMENTS.

H. APPROXIMATELY 40PCT OF 1977 MAURITANIAN OPERATING BUDGET RECEIPTS SCHEDULED TO BE DERIVED FROM CUSTOMS DUTIES.

I. LOSS OF CUSTOMS REVENUES CAN BE OFFSET BY ECOWAS MECHANISMS.

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J. THE TARGETS APPEAR TO BE OVERLY AMBITIOUS. REDUCTION, NOT REMOVAL OF CUSTOMS DUTIES IS MORE REASONABLE GOAL.

K. THE VERY LIMITED U.S. TRADE AND INVESTMENT IS UNLIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED GREATLY, ALTHOUGH SOME INCREASE FROM LARGER MARKET COULD RESULT.

L. FUND IS POTENTIAL VEHICLE FOR AID, BUT RELATIVE IMPORTANCE VIS-A-VIS OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS OMVS, CILSS AND ADB, IS YET TO BE DETERMINED.

FARLEY

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